Department of State

TELEGRAM

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9148
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 4609
CINPCAC
AMCONSUL DANANG 1148
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE 2798

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8983

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS: CHUONG THIEN

REF: SAIGON 6749

1. THREE OF THE FIVE CANDIDATES WHO ORIGINALLY FILED FOR CHUONG'S THIEN'S SINGLE VIETNAMESE LOWER HOUSE SEAT REMAIN IN THE RACE (REFTEL REPORTED BASIC BIOGRAPHIC DATA). NGUYEN HUU MAT WITHDREW TO RUN FROM SA DEC PROVINCE, WHERE HE IS ACTIVELY CAMPAIGNING ON A "PAEACE" PLATFORM COMPLETE WITH WHITE DOVE SYMBOL. NGUYEN TAM KHANH FAILED TO SUBMIT SUFFICIENT DOCUMENTAITION.

2. CHUONG THIEN RACE CHARACTERIZED BY BITTER CONTEST BETWEEN

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TWO HOA HAO, CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEPUTY DANG VAN CONG AND HUYNH PHUOC HAI, DRUGSTORE OWNER IN DUC LONG DISTRICT. CONG WAS ELECTED TO CA IN 1966 WITH ABOUT 60 PERCENT OF CHUONG THIEN VOTE; HE WAS ALSO THIEU/KY LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE IN PRESIDENTIAL RACE. CONG IS SAID TO HAVE SUPPORT OF MILITARY OFFICERS IN THE PROVINCE INCLUDING THE CHUONG THIEN DEPUTY FOR SECURITY AND PROVINCIAL CENSUS GRIEVANCE CHIEF. LOCAL OBERVERS TERM CONG THE "GVN" CANDIDATE. HAI HAS SUPPORT FROM TRAN VAN TUOI
RACTION VYING FOR CONTROL OF HOA HAO CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. THEY ARE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF EACH OTHER, EACH CLAIMS TO BE "THE" HAO HAO CANDIDATE.

3. NON-HOA IS NGO MINH DUC, FORMERLY CHUONG THIEN REFUGEE SERVICE CHIEF. DUC GRADUATED FROM SAIGON UNIVERSITY IN 1964 AND IS BOTH YOUNGER AND FAR BETTER EDUCATED THAN THE TWO HAO HAO CONTENDERS. HE IS CONSIDERED ENERGETIC AND ABLE. DUC HOPES HOA HAO VOTE WILL BE SPLIT. HE HAAPPROGRAM OF AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT INCLUDING CANCELLATION OF FARMERS' REPAYMENT OF NACO LOANS. DUC WILL GET SUPPORT FROM CATHOLICS (HE IS AN ANCESTOR-WORSHIPPER HIMSELF), SOME CIVIL SERVANTS. THE

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YOUNGER GENERATION AND POSSIBLY ALSO FROM THE SMALL CAMBODIAN ELEMENT.

4. ADDITIONALCONTENTIOUS NOTE ADDED TO CHUONG TIEN RACE BY JOINT PROTEST FILED BY DUC AND HAI AGAINST CONG. THEY HAVE OFFICIALLY COMPLAINED THAT CONG IS BEING IMPORPERLY SUPPORTED BY RD CADRE. THEY HAVE REQUESTED OFFICIAL (I. E. GVN) OBSERVERS BE PROVIDED TO ENSURE THAT CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION WILL BE FAIRLY CONDUCTED. THEY REQUEST THAT IF OBSERVERS NOT PROVIDED ELECTION SHOULD EITHER BE POSTPONED OR THE RESULTS IN THE THREE DISTRICTS WHERE THEY ALLEGE MOST FLAGRANT MISUSE OF RD CADRE HAS OCCURRED BE DISREGARDED. HAI AND DUC HAVE SAID THEY WILL "STOP CAMPAIGNING" UNTIL OFFICIAL REPLY IS RECEIVED TO THEIR REQUEST FOR OBSERVERS.

5. VARIOUS ALLEGATIONS BY HAI AND DUC AGAINST CONGTCCANNOT

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BE VERIFIED; HOWEER, THEY PROBABLY.3183:3.79,&'S LARGE MAJORITY IN 1966 CA ELECTION (60 PERCENT) MAY HAVE BEEN DUE TO SUPPORT FRN HOA HAO RF/PF COMMANDERS WHO CAN EXERT MUCH INFLUENCE IN OUTLYING DISTRICTS. CONG AND HAI PROBABLY HOPE TO FORESTALL ANY POSSIBLE IMPORPER PRESSURE THIS TIME.

6. ONLY ONE CANDIDATE IS STANDING FOR CHUONG THIEN'S SINGLE CAMBODIAN SEAT, DANH NO. OTHER PERSONN WHO INITIALLY

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FILED FOR THE CAMBODIAN SEAT, NGUYEN KIM KY, WAS DIS-QUALIFIED ON GROUNDS HE IS NOT AN ETHNIC CAMBODIAN. LY'S APPEAL TO CENTRAL ELECTION COUNCIL WAS DISALLOWED.

7. NO HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN CAMBODIAN THEREAVADA AFFAIRS AND IS CLOSE TO DNAH THU, CANDIDATE FOR CAMBODIAN SEAT IN NEARBY KIEN GIANG. BUNKER

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